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Good morning Chairman Souder, Congressman Cummings, Members of the Subcommittee.

I thank you for this opportunity to share some thoughts on the critical need to do everything we can to protect children and families from drug-related intimidation and violence.

Gentlemen, like everyone else here in Baltimore and across America, I was shocked when I learned that the Dawson family had been killed by an appalling act of drug-related violence in October of last year.

I commend you, Congressman Cummings, and you, Chairman Souder, for your efforts to enact the Dawson Family Community Protection Act: expanding federal support for protective measures like anonymous, anti-drug hotlines.

This legislation and funding is very much needed.

Both here in Baltimore and in communities like the those you represent in Indiana, Chairman Souder, the lives of law-abiding citizens are increasingly dominated by the fear and suffering that are inevitable consequences of illegal drugs and related violence.

I can confirm this harsh reality, both as a public health professional and from my past experience as Maryland Secretary for Children, Youth and Families.

Last year, the Baltimore City Council determined that there are an estimated 59,000 illicit substance users in the City of Baltimore – of whom only 10 percent were receiving needed treatment at that time.

A seldom-mentioned corollary of that fact is that nearly 600,000 Baltimoreans are not using illicit substances.

Yet, we are living in fear of drug-related violence every night and day - the very realistic fear that any of us could suffer the same violence that took the lives of Mr. and Mrs. Dawson and five of their children last year.

That is why I am here today to commend the work of this Subcommittee. Your work offers us hope that, with hard work, we can be released from this constant state of fear.

I especially applaud your vision and wisdom in supporting practical, common-sense measures that encourage the mobilization of families and communities in self-defense against the drug plague.

Gentlemen, as Director of the University of Maryland School of Nursing's Center for Healthy Children and Families, I have been working with Dr. Keith Plowden, Mr. Terrell Ringer, the Empower Baltimore Management Corporation and Congressman Cummings' office to assist community leaders from throughout Baltimore take action to better protect their families and neighborhoods against the drug plague.

People in Baltimore are determined to fight illegal drugs in their neighborhoods through the formation and expansion of community anti-drug coalitions modeled on strategies found to be effective by the President's Office of Drug Control Policy.

I have appended a copy of our most recent report and recommendations with respect to this effort to my written testimony; and with your permission, I ask that our "Blue Print for Livable Communities Through Collaborative Partnerships: A Case Study on Baltimore City Drug Control Initiative" be made part of the record of this hearing.

Because of our focus and time limitations today, I will not speak extensively about this report.

Rather, I will close by noting just two of the salient conclusions of the participating community leaders from throughout Baltimore.

First - our greatest strength in the struggle against drugs and drug-related violence is the ability of communities to form drug-free coalitions (including those that are established to achieve such diverse objectives as recovery houses for individuals who are substance abusers, youth organizations such as Police Athletic Leagues, church and other faith-based initiatives, neighborhood watch programs and Citizens on Patrol).

Second - success in drug prevention, as well as policing, will depend upon our developing far better lines of communication between citizen activists and government.

To state the current reality plainly, gentlemen:

- X People in our neighborhoods want to cooperate with government in ridding their communities of drugs and drug-related violence.
- X However, as the tragic lesson of the Dawson family has taught the people of Baltimore, reasonable citizens cannot and will not cooperate unless they can do so in ways that are effective and - equally important - safe.

That, as I mentioned to you earlier, is why your initiative in supporting the Dawson Family Community Protection Act is so very, very important.

Now, I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.